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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended)   A method comprising:

receiving a command from a client to specify an export limit for routes exported from an exterior routing protocol executing on a network device to an interior routing protocol executing on the network device;

maintaining a count of routes exported from the exterior routing protocol executing on the network device to an the interior routing protocol executing on the network device; and

rejecting additional routes exported from the exterior routing protocol to the interior routing protocol when the count exceeds an the export limit set by the command.; and

receiving a command from a client to enable a network device to maintain the count and to reject the routes based on the count and the export limit.

Claim 2–4 (Cancelled)

Claim 5 (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

updating routing information to associate the routes with a maximum metric that defines a maximum distance from the network device to neighboring network devices when the count exceeds the export limit; and

advertising the updated routing information to a network device.

Claim 6 (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:

updating routing information to set an overload bit of a link state prefix associated with the routes when the count exceeds the export limit; and

advertising the updated routing information to a network device.

-2-

Claim 7 (Currently Amended)   A method comprising:

maintaining a count of routes exported from an exterior routing protocol executing on a network device to an interior routing protocol executing on the network device;

rejecting additional routes exported from the exterior routing protocol executing on the network device to the interior routing protocol executing on the network device when the count exceeds an export limit; and

updating routing information when the count exceeds the export limit to clear the routes exported to the interior routing protocol.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended)   A method comprising:

maintaining a count of routes exported from an exterior routing protocol executing on a network device to an interior routing protocol executing on the network device;

rejecting additional routes exported from an exterior routing protocol executing on the network device to the interior routing protocol executing on the network device when the count exceeds an export limit; and

waiting for intervention by the client before accepting the additional routes.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 8, wherein maintaining a count comprises maintaining respective counts for instances of the interior routing protocol, and wherein rejecting additional routes comprises:

identifying one of the instances of the interior routing protocol to which the routes were exported;

comparing the respective count for the identified one of the instances; and

rejecting additional routes exported to the interior routing protocol to the identified one of the instances based on the comparison.

-3-

Claim 10 (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 9, further comprising:

receiving a prefix limit command that specifies the export limit and an associated one of the instances of the interior routing protocol; and

maintaining the respective count for the specified one of the instances in response to the command.

Claim 11 (Original)   A method comprising:

receiving at a network device an export limit command from a client; and

counting, in response to the export limit command, a number of routes exported from an exterior routing protocol process executing on the network device to an interior routing protocol process executing on the network device.

Claim 12 (Original)   The method of claim 11, further comprising:

receiving from the client an export limit indicative of a maximum number of routes that can be exported from the exterior routing protocol process to the interior routing protocol process;

comparing the counted number of routes to the export limit; and

rejecting additional routes exported from the exterior routing protocol process to the interior routing protocol process when the counted number of routes exceeds the export limit.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 12, further comprising waiting for intervention from the client before accepting the additional routes from the exterior routing protocol.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 11, further comprising:

updating routing information of the network device to associate interior routes with a maximum metric that defines a maximum distance from the network device to neighboring network devices when the count exceeds the export limit; and

advertising the updated routing information to another network device.

-4-

Application Number 10/687,989
Amendment dated September 10, 2008
Response to Office Action mailed June 10, 2008

Claim 15 (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising updating routing information of the network device when the count exceeds the export limit to clear the routes exported from the exterior routing protocol.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended) A method comprising limiting, in response to a command from a client that specifies an export limit, a number of routes exported from an exterior routing protocol ~~of~~executing on a network device to an interior routing protocol ~~of~~executing on the network device.

Claim 17 (Cancelled)

Claim 18 (Currently Amended) A system comprising:
a management interface to receive a command that specifies an export limit; and
a control unit that limits a number of routes exported from an external routing protocol executing on a network device to an interior routing protocol executing on the network device in accordance with the export limit.

Claim 19 (Original) The system of claim 18, further comprising a prefix counter to count the routes exported to the interior routing protocol and generate a prefix count, wherein the control unit compares the prefix count to the export limit and limits the number of routes exported to the interior routing protocol based on the comparison.

Claim 20 (Original) The system of claim 19, wherein the control unit rejects additional routes to be exported to the interior routing protocol when the prefix count exceeds the export limit.

Claim 21 (Original) The system of claim 18, further including an exterior routing protocol that supports a larger number of routes than the interior routing protocol.

Claim 22 (Original) The system of claim 21, wherein the control unit communicates with an internet service provider via the exterior routing protocol.

-5-

Application Number 10/687,989
Amendment dated September 10, 2008
Response to Office Action mailed June 10, 2008

Claim 23 (Original) The system of claim 18, further comprising a plurality of instances of the interior routing protocol executing on the system, wherein the control unit separately limits the number of routes exported to each of the instances.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented) The system of claim 23, wherein the control unit includes a plurality of prefix counters to maintain respective counts for the number of routes exported to each of the instances.

Claim 25 (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the control unit identifies an instance of the interior routing protocol to which routes were exported, accesses the respective prefix counter to compare the stored count with an associated prefix limit, and rejects additional routes exported from the exterior routing protocol to the identified instance based on the comparison.

Claim 26 (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein the system comprises a router.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium comprising instructions to cause a processor to:

present a management interface to receive a command from a client;

receive a command, from the client through the management interface, to specify an export limit for routes exported from an exterior routing protocol executing on a network device to an interior routing protocol executing on the network device;

maintain a count of routes exported from an exterior routing protocol executing on the network device to an interior routing protocol executing on the network device; and

reject additional routes to be exported from the exterior routing protocol based on the count and an export limit.; and

receive a command from a client to enable a network device to maintain the count and to reject the additional routes based on the count and the export limit.

Claim 28-29 (Cancelled)

-6-

Claim 30 (Currently Amended)   The computer-readable medium of claim 27, further comprising instructions to cause the processor to operate in an overload condition when the count exceeds the export limit to:

update routing information to associate interior routes with a maximum metric that defines a maximum distance from the network device to neighboring network devices;

update the routing information to clear the routes exported from the exterior routing protocol;

advertise the updated routing information; and

wait for intervention before returning to a normal mode of operation.

Claim 31 (Original)   The computer-readable medium of claim 27, further comprising instructions to cause the processor to:

maintain respective counts for instances of the interior routing protocol;

identify one of the instances of the interior routing protocol to which the routes were exported;

compare the respective count for the identified one of the instances; and

reject additional routes exported from the exterior routing protocol to the identified one of the instances based on the comparison.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented)   The computer-readable medium of claim 31, instructions to cause the processor to receive a prefix limit command that specifies the export limit and an associated one of the instances of the interior routing protocol, and maintain the respective count for the specified one of the instances in response to the command.

Claim 33 (Currently Amended)   A method comprising:

receiving a command to direct a network device to count routes exported from an exterior routing protocol executing on the network device to an interior routing protocol executing on the network device;

receiving an export limit indicative of a maximum number of routes that may be exported from the exterior routing protocol to a specific instance of the interior routing protocol;

exporting routes from the exterior routing protocol to the specific instance of the interior routing protocol;

incrementing a prefix count each time a route is exported from the exterior routing protocol to the specific instance of the interior routing protocol;

comparing the prefix count to the export limit; and

rejecting additional routes from the exterior routing protocol if the prefix count exceeds the export limit.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended)   A system, comprising:

data defining an export limit corresponding to a maximum number of routes that may be exported from an exterior routing protocol executing on a network device to an interior routing protocol executing on the network device; and

a prefix counter that maintains a prefix count corresponding to a total number of routes exported from the exterior routing protocol in response to a command that specifies an export limit.

Claim 35 (Original)   The system of claim 34, further comprising a control unit that accesses the prefix counter to compare the prefix count with the export limit to limit the number of routes that may be exported from the exterior routing protocol.

Claim 36 (Cancelled)

Claim 37 (Original)   A network device comprising:

a first routing protocol module and a second routing protocol module, wherein the first routing protocol module exports network routes to the second routing protocol module;

an interface to receive a command that specifies an export limit; and

a control unit that prevents the first routing protocol module from exporting more than the export limit of the network routes to the second routing module.

Claim 38 (Original)   The network device of claim 37, wherein the network device comprises a router.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented)   The network device of claim 37, wherein the interface receives the command from a remote client.

Claim 40 (Original)   The network device of claim 39, wherein the remote client comprises one of a human user and an automated script.

Claim 41 (Original)   The network device of claim 37, wherein the first routing protocol module comprises an exterior routing protocol module and the second routing protocol module comprises an interior routing protocol module.

-9-